

Move to End C.I.A. Tie Held Reflection

of New Campus Views

By STEVEN V. ROBERTS
Many past and current leaders of the National Student Association feel that the group's decision to end its ties with the Central Intelligence Agency illustrates the changing nature of the American student community and the history of the association.

The National Student Association was founded in 1947 primarily to give the United States a voice in the post-war international student world—a world dominated by the cold war, the leaders note.

In those years, they continued, accepting C.I.A. funds to promote what the students considered to be the progressive elements in American society was important and useful.

Today attitudes have changed, according to W. Dennis Shaul, a Rhodes Scholar who was president of the association in 1962-63.

Mr. Shaul makes the following assessment:

"This whole break represents an extreme difference between student leaders of my generation and the present generation. We were internationally minded and wanted to promote the best aspects of America. 'We thought it was worth doing, both because it would have a good effect on domestic politics, and it would promote international good feeling for the country.'

"The leaders of N.S.A. today are more concerned with alienation from the nation's own institutions. It is in this light that they concluded that a relationship with the C.I.A. was intolerable."

1st World Student Congress

The concept of the association—which many students feel may be doomed by disclosure of the past link with the C.I.A.—began in 1946 when 25 American youths attended the first World Student Congress in Prague.

They came home convinced that a national union of students was necessary to give American young people a vehicle for participating in international student politics.

Those who had been at Prague formed a coordinating committee and organized a constitutional convention in Madison, Wis., in the summer of 1947.

About 700 student delegates formally established the association and elected William B. Welsh, a former infantryman from Berea College in Kentucky as its first president.

In its early years the association concentrated on foreign affairs. The student community was torn by disputes over Com-

that maintaining American participation in this turbulent world was vitally important. It is for this reason that when private funds grew scarce they approached the C.I.A. in 1952 for aid.

The relationship continued for 15 years and provided the association with about \$200,000 a year. The exact totals are not known, since the grants were funneled through private foundations, often for specific projects, and were never presented in a lump sum.

Subsidy Not Regretted

"I don't regret taking the money," said a college professor, who was chairman of a Southern region of the association in the early Nineteen-Fifties. "If we hadn't been able to participate in international student affairs there would have been no one else working with the students from developing nations except the Soviets."

"In addition," he said, "we developed a cooperative feeling with Soviet students we met at conferences and festivals. We really kept open channels of communication that had been officially closed down by the cold war."

Like many former student leaders, the professor insisted that "whatever C.I.A. links existed had a minimal effect on the international policy of N.S.A."

The professor said he did not know of the C.I.A. connection, but suspected the well-financed international program was getting some Government aid, probably from the State Department.

The domestic activities of the association in the nineteen-fifties reflected largely the apathy and indifference that most students had toward politics.

The association occasionally spoke out on an important issue—it denounced "McCarthyism" in 1951—but usually confined itself to such "sandbox issues" as social programs and student parking.

Most observers of student politics feel an important turning point came in 1960, when Southern Negro students began the sit-in demonstrations in Greensboro, N. C.

These sit-ins stimulated new

interest in domestic political problems among American students—an interest that was reflected by the National Student Association.

The association strongly supported the Negro students with financial help and advice. For a number of years the association's national affairs vice president served on the board of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the spearhead of the sit-in movement.

In addition to civil rights the annual summer congresses of the association began to speak out on other controversial domestic issues.

The delegates, who were representatives of the student governments on their campuses, voted to call for the abolition of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. They advocated the elimination of the loyalty oath in the National Defense Education Act and denounced compulsory Reserve Officer Training Corps programs.

In the international sphere the students strongly opposed the Federal Government on the

issues of nuclear testing, the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, intervention in the Dominican Republic and the war in Vietnam.

These policies evoked increasing criticism of the association by conservative politicians and youth groups, primarily the Young Americans for Freedom, which conducted a nationwide campaign to get schools to withdraw from the association.

However, the leadership of the association remained generally quite liberal. According to most observers, the leaders also reflected the disillusionment and alienation espoused by such "New Left" groups, such as Students for a Democratic Society, whose leadership included many former association officials.

This alienation, the students themselves assert, is a product of growing opposition to the war in Vietnam, disillusionment with the campaigns against segregation and poverty, and a waning of the zeal for public service that President Kennedy evoked. Intolerance for the C.I.A., the students believe, has been compounded by revelations in books and articles of its role in the Bay of Pigs invasion and other incidents.

Many past officers of the association were highly critical of the current officers for renouncing the link with the C.I.A. They feel that the most important question was how much control was exerted by the intelligence agency.

A recent association vice president for international affairs, who did not want to be identified, said he did not even know of the C.I.A. link.

"I suspected there was some State Department money," he said, "but in any case, the most important thing I can say is that the policy N.S.A. conducted was within the context of the mandates passed at each congress and was independent of outside influence."

However, one recent president conceded that the C.I.A. had tried to influence the selection of staff members to run certain programs, and get the organization to start activities in certain fields. These influences were resisted, the former president said.

Most former officers and staff members who knew of the C.I.A. link—there were only one or two a year—were deeply concerned that a weak president would be elected and "the C.I.A. would run all over him," one said. He conceded that he and other colleagues had encouraged stu-

*See: 1. History Association for Freedom
2. Students for a Democratic Society*